



on ground wells for 14% of its needs.

"This thing is expanding every day," said Jack J. Coe, Los Angeles office chief of the State Dept. of Water Resources.

TCE, a volatile chlorinated hydrocarbon solvent, has been used widely as a degreasing agent in many industrial applications. In 1975, the National Cancer Institute identified TCE as a cause of cancer in laboratory mice. Pending further study, the Environmental Protection Agency has recommended a maximum TCE presence in water of 5 parts/billion. TCE levels in the closed Los Angeles wells have ranged from 7 to 619 ppb. "It's nothing to be alarmed about," said William R. Ree, senior sanitary engineer for the Los Angeles Dept. of Water and Power, "but I'm concerned because it shouldn't be there."

Tests made for an environmental-impact statement in late December revealed the first high TCE levels in the San Gabriel Valley. Since then investigators have discovered high TCE content in four other water basins in the Los Angeles area, with half of the city's 100 wells yet to be tested.

Marc L. Lappe, director of the state's hazard-alert system, also predicted that 25 other potentially hazardous volatile hydrocarbons will soon be identified in southern California water supplies, "and it will be expensive, and mandatory, to clean them up." □

EPA partially settles Jersey waste suit

In a partial settlement stemming from a suit brought by the Environmental Protection Agency against the disposal firm Kin-Buc Inc. (Edison, N.J.), the company last week agreed to secure its dump site.

Terms call for Kin-Buc Inc. to build a cover over a mound of refuse, to prevent rainwater from soaking into the mound and causing leaching of contaminants.

In February 1979 the Justice Dept. filed a 69-count complaint charging the operators with violating federal environmental laws.

Barbara Blum, EPA's deputy administrator, says the case is complicated, and "may take several years to work its way through the courts. I feel it is in the public interest to solve the most pressing problems immediately—in essence, to put a cork in the bottle."

Under the agreement, the company must inspect and maintain the cover system for at least 20 years, and EPA has the right to inspect and take samples. □

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